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UNICEF Education Strategy

Summary

The Education Strategy defines the contribution of UNICEF to national efforts to fulfil children's right to education and achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, within the context of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (SP) for 2006-2009. It has been developed through intensive consultation with a wide range of key partners and UNICEF staff.

It is recommended that the Board adopt the draft decision in section VI.

I. Introduction

1. The international commitment to universal education was first set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has been repeatedly reaffirmed in meetings and agreements since, including at the Regional Conferences on Education (1960–1966) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and at conferences such as the World Summit for Children (1990), the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand (1990), the World Education Forum in Dakar (2000) and the Millennium Development Summit Declaration and Goals (2000).

2. Significant progress towards the goal of universal education has been made: according to the *Millennium Development Goals Report 2006*, 86 per cent of all children of primary school age in the developing world are enrolled in primary

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school. In at least 51 countries, the enrolment rate is well over 95 per cent; in only 5 countries (all in Africa) less than 50 per cent of school-aged children enrolled.

3. But despite such progress, an estimated 115 million primary-school-aged children were out of school during the 2001/2002 school year, and 77 million were not even enrolled in 2004.[1] Many of those enrolled in school fail to finish; some take longer to complete school due to repetition; many who finish have learned little.

4. Progress has been too slow to meet Millennium Development Goal 2: universal primary education by 2015, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where almost 80 per cent of the world's out-of-school children live. The 2005 interim goal for Millennium Development Goal 3: gender parity in primary and secondary education, has already been missed, and an education gender gap, while narrowing, persists in most regions of the world. Progress is also being threatened by deepening poverty, frequent civil conflict, child labour practices, persistent drought and the impact of AIDS on families and communities, as well as on the education system itself.

5. Without an education, children are less likely to be healthy, grow strong, be safe or fully participate in their communities. Without universal education, countries are less likely to achieve the other development goals.

A. Yesterday's contributions and today's partnerships

6. Since 1990, UNICEF has made major contributions to help countries to achieve the goal of education for all. These have been mainly through innovative projects and programmes in areas such as: early childhood to improve school readiness and get more children to start school at the right age; support for teacher training to help improve quality of schooling; the supply of teaching/learning resources to improve learning achievement; the provision of school meals and health checks to support regular attendance by disadvantaged children; the provision of water and sanitation facilities to make schools healthy and safe; advocacy for the right of all children to education, and support for those who can facilitate this right; measures to support girls' participation and performance in education; and measures to restore learning opportunities to children affected by emergencies such as natural disasters or civil conflict.

7. These contributions have helped countries to move towards the goal of providing quality primary education for all children. UNICEF works mainly through partnerships with other organizations to support national leadership and plans for achieving this goal. At the international level, there are four core partnerships in education to accelerate progress in achieving Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3.

8. **The Education For All Global Action Plan (EFA-GAP)**, coordinated by UNESCO, provides technical support to develop national education plans for achieving the six EFA goals (Dakar Goals) and monitors EFA progress. By linking its contributions to the planning expertise provided to countries by other partners,

[1] New estimates are expected mid-year 2007 when the findings of the latest multiple indicator cluster surveys are analysed.

UNICEF can mainstream its successful initiatives more systematically into national plans and priorities. UNICEF also links its monitoring and evaluation efforts to the wider overview of progress that the EFA Global Monitoring Report provides.

9. **The EFA Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI)**, anchored by the World Bank, supports design of credible education sector plans and finances funding gaps in national plans for universal primary completion. UNICEF is better able to influence national plans and priorities as part of the FTI partnership, especially in gender parity and equality in education. Many countries can better attract the financing they need for scaling up initiatives once these initiatives become part of their national plans and are financed by the FTI.

10. **The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)**, anchored by UNICEF, provides advocacy and technical support for gender parity and equality in designing, financing and implementing national education plans. Through UNGEI, UNICEF is better able to marshal the influence and resources of a wide range of partners to support gender parity and equality in national education plans and priorities.

11. **The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Cluster for Education in Emergencies** is intended to better coordinate efforts by many partners to restore schooling to populations affected by emergencies due to conflict and natural disasters. It also helps coordinate the efforts of partners to rebuild education systems to help return countries that have been affected by emergencies to normal development.

II. UNICEF goals and objectives in education

12. The Education Strategy, by assisting countries — especially priority countries — to achieve Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3, can help restore normalcy in emergency situations and rebuild young lives and reconstruct systems in post-crisis countries. The strategy guides pursuit of these goals in partnership with other key partners, including non-governmental and civil society organizations. Within these overall goals, the broad objectives are:

(a) To help countries achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015, by making their education systems inclusive and focused on quality, so that:

- All children have equal access to quality education, preferably in formal schools that serve their best interests (child-friendly schools).
- All children are able to start school at the right age, with an adequate level of preparation and ready to learn.
- All children can progress normally, acquire the prescribed competencies and complete the education cycle.

(b) To help countries achieve the target of eliminating gender disparity at all educational levels by 2015, address other disparities in education and promote gender equality in society through education, so that:

- Gender and other disparities are addressed in the earliest stages of learning for all girls and boys.

- Gender and other disparities are an integral concern of quality in education at primary and post-primary levels.
- All girls and boys can be empowered by their experience of schooling and go on to achieve to their full potential through quality education.

(c) To help countries restore normalcy to children and adolescents affected by conflict and natural disasters (emergencies), as part of the process of rebuilding communities, institutions, systems and individual lives in all emergencies and post-crisis situations, so that:

- All children can have equal access to the protection and learning opportunities offered by schools and quality education in the aftermath of an emergency.
- The safety, security and other basic needs of children affected by conflict and natural disasters become an integral part of humanitarian response through quality education interventions.
- Quality education serves as the first 'peace dividend' in post-conflict societies and as the platform for rebuilding young lives and building back systems and institutions better than before.

13. The UNICEF education strategy in support of the Millennium Development Goals, within the context of the MTSP, builds on past experiences and contributions, and places increasing emphasis on programmes that are developed within the following guiding principles:

- Within existing national education frameworks and reinforcing existing mechanism and tools.
- Through partnerships that are interlinked and seamless.
- With a focus on intersectoral links across programmes for children.
- To add value, based on evidence of good practices and experiences.
- To respond to the urgent needs of countries and populations.
- To build knowledge for action, by learning through doing.

14. The comparative advantage of UNICEF in contributing to the core partnerships lies in its extensive country presence; its track record as a voice for children and young people; and its central involvement in the United Nations coherence process.

15. The agency also offers constructive support for country leadership with the innovative notion of 'accompanying' countries. This entails working with partners to constantly advocate for a human rights-based approach to education, share experiences of good practice, provide technical advice for problem-solving, help to build national capacity and generally help to strengthen the education system. These types of contributions enable partners to 'walk the path' with countries, i.e., to accompany them as they develop credible plans and decide on priorities.

Working within existing national frameworks and reinforcing existing mechanisms and tools

16. Together with UNESCO, the World Bank and other education partners, UNICEF is committed to the principle of external support within the framework of a

single, credible national plan for education in each country. As an in-country partner that is active in education in most developing countries, UNICEF helps countries with the consultative and participatory process for developing plans for education and linking them to poverty reduction strategies or a national development plan. The agency is also committed to the principle of sector-wide budget support to countries by many donors and will increase efforts to leverage funding for national plans and priorities, first emphasizing budgeting for children and then funding to support its own work.

Focusing on partnerships that are interlinked and 'seamless'

17. UNICEF will focus on the four key partnerships around the EFA-GAP, EFA-FTI, UNGEI and IASC cluster approach. The partnerships are linked by common membership of three key agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank) and by the synergistic way they address planning, financing, gender disparities and emergencies in education.

18. In Liberia, for example, the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank work closely to provide 'seamless' support for education. A simulation model developed by UNESCO is used by all agencies to channel technical support to the Government for development of a credible education sector plan. Also, UNICEF is funding the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) to develop an Education Management Information System, which the Government and partners will use for planning and management.

19. Again, in countries seeking EFA-FTI funding, all in-country partners jointly review the national education plans. In the process, other important reviews relating to gender and to HIV prevention are carried out by UNGEI and Inter-Agency Task Team on Education partners. So all partners are doing all reviews through one seamless FTI process that does not have multiple channels.

20. In addition to the four key partnerships, UNICEF engages selectively in other partnerships for efficient collaboration on specific issues/themes or regional concerns, e.g., the Inter-Agency Task Team for Education and HIV/AIDS; the School Fees Abolition Initiative led by World Bank, UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development and UNESCO; the Association for the Development of Education in Africa; and several others. These are important partnerships through which UNICEF pools technical expertise with others, formulates common advocacy positions, develops policy guidance, and influences major donors on behalf of education. However, less time and fewer resources are allocated to these collaborations than to the four key partnerships.

Intersectoral linkages in education programmes

21. As a children's agency, UNICEF is interested in the whole child. Progress in education leads to benefits in other sectors, just as interventions in other sectors contribute to gains in education. The recognition of this integrated approach is makes this current education strategy of UNICEF significantly different from its past strategies and those of other agencies. UNICEF will further emphasize in its programming the relationship of education to health, nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, HIV and AIDS and child protection. Child-friendly schools are one of the most obvious examples of how this holistic approach to education programming results in greater benefits for children.

Value-added and evidence-based contributions

22. UNICEF will emphasize its value-added and evidence-based contributions, for example, training in child-centred pedagogy that prepares teachers for child-friendly schools and helps to establish quality standards. Similarly, classroom construction and supplying learning materials to expand access can be a routine exercise. There is more value in supporting 'model' child-friendly schools to set standards for quality as part of expanding the education system.

Responsive to urgent and critical needs

23. UNICEF works responsively to meet the urgent and critical needs of those who have lost access to education due to emergency conditions, as well as of population groups that are unreached and underserved by the education system. UNICEF is committed to being a first responder for education in emergencies and gives priority to 'reaching the unreached' where there are hidden disparities in national education statistics.

24. Education systems can collapse in emergencies due to conflict or natural disasters. UNICEF works with partners to restore schooling, within the context of protection, to affected populations while laying the groundwork to rebuild the education system. Even without emergencies, education systems often fail to reach and cater adequately to groups such as remote rural communities, poor communities, ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, indigenous groups, migrant communities, refugees and internally displaced persons. UNICEF will continue to work with partners to meet the needs of these groups and safeguard their right to education through targeted interventions while also helping countries develop more inclusive education systems.

25. UNICEF supports efforts to reach the last 10 per cent of out-of-school children. This is typically a difficult-to-reach population group within countries that have otherwise been successful in providing quality education to almost all children.

26. UNICEF continues its work with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, including as a member of the Network's Secretariat and through advancing the Network's *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and Early Reconstruction*.

Building knowledge through learning from doing

27. UNICEF is committed to using lessons from its education interventions to build global knowledge of what works in education for different groups and different countries under various conditions. Lessons from emergency response strategies, from work in fragile states and from work with child-friendly schools to support quality in education are being monitored as a priority for addressing the global knowledge gaps that exist in education and development. Best-practice models are developed based on these lessons, and UNICEF helps set standards for universal quality basic education through these models. This practice of learning from doing in education programming will help UNICEF expand its position as "a centre of excellence on children and a knowledge broker of choice."

III. Programming priorities and scope

A. Programming themes and support areas

28. Education programming and implementation will focus on three priority themes and two cross-cutting support areas. The priority themes reflect the comparative advantage of UNICEF and the expectations that donors/partners have of its ability to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The cross-cutting support areas are critical for achieving results in the priority themes and also reflect the strengths of UNICEF in mainstreaming key elements to produce results.

29. There are three priority themes ("3Es"):

- **Equal** access and universal primary completion
- **Empowerment** through girls' education and gender mainstreaming
- **Emergencies** and post-crisis education cluster interventions

30. The priority themes are supported by two cross-cutting areas:

- **Early** child development and school readiness
- **Enhancing** quality in primary and secondary education

Equal access and universal primary completion

31. The first priority theme, equal opportunities for children to access and complete primary education, focuses on addressing disparities that affect children's right to education and helping countries to reduce the percentage of primary-school-aged children who are out of school. UNICEF provides different types of support for different categories of countries as a contribution to national efforts and as part of the coordinated support of external partners. Examples of the type of support that UNICEF offers in this first priority theme are outlined in table 1 below. Most of these are already being used in several countries.

Table 1: Examples of support for equal access and universal completion

Type of support measure	Application of support measure
Abolish or reduce school fees and other charges in order to generate an enrolment surge (***School Fee Abolition Initiative***)	• For countries where poverty is a major barrier to access • Yields an enrolment surge that needs to be well managed • Lessons from successful countries are used to support others
Mass-distribute a customized 'Essential Learning Package' to trigger high enrolment, regular attendance and quality learning	• For countries with low and stagnating enrolment levels • Based on lessons from back-to-school emergency work • Scaled-up version of 'supplies for schools' in poor areas • Cultivates national capacity for handling school supplies
Provide multiple services for children in schools (e.g., school feeding; care and support; health and nutrition) to help keep the most vulnerable children in school (***Schools for Learning 'Plus'***)	• For countries with overstretched support systems due to multiple threats (HIV, drought, violence, poverty, etc.) • Initiated by Education Ministers in southern Africa • Offers opportunity for multi-country collaboration

Establish standards to make all schools effective, efficient, supportive and safe for children; to boost enrolment and improve attendance (***Child-Friendly Schools***)	• For countries where poor quality affects enrolment and completion rates, or with poor school-community links • Lessons learned through work in wide range of countries • Cultivates national capacity for using quality standards

Empowerment through girls' education and gender mainstreaming

32. The second priority theme, gender parity and gender equality in education, is critical to achieving Millennium Development Goal 3 on gender equality. UNICEF has a strong track record in girls' education and the related impact on integrated health interventions for healthy mothers and healthy babies in child survival programming. Based on experience with girls' education in a wide range of countries, it is clear that gender affects other disparities like poverty, disability, or rural location. Girls in these categories tend to be more adversely affected than boys in access to quality education.

33. Girls' education is both a means of addressing gender disparity and a strategy for leveraging gains in dealing with other disparities. The contribution of UNICEF, especially through UNGEI, will be designed to address gender parity, champion gender mainstreaming and help countries to move beyond gender parity to gender equality. This is more about empowerment through education than just parity of numbers for girls and boys enrolled in school. Examples of the support provided are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Examples of support for girls' education and gender mainstreaming

Type of support measure	Application of support measure
Use gender-disaggregated data to highlight education disparities at subnational levels and for disadvantaged groups (*multiple indicator cluster surveys)*	• For situation analysis and national sector planning work • For advocacy with countries and major donors *(FTI)* • For review of national education plans and priorities
Use gender budget analysis to help direct resources to support countries' commitments on gender and plans and priorities for education	• For review of national education plans and budgets • For planning and evaluating midterm expenditures • For advocacy with countries and major donors • For cultivating national capacity for results-based budgeting
Promote life-skills-based education with a gender focus in child-friendly schools, especially at the post-primary level, and include sexual and reproductive health	• For countries with gender problems in the curriculum • So teachers can tackle gender issues related to HIV infection, violence, etc. • To empower girls in a way that works for boys too • To cultivate 'parenting knowledge/skills' in adolescents
Support female role models in education, such as female teachers, school heads and senior officials, or women in key positions in politics and development	• For countries with high gender disparity in education • For gender advocacy and communication campaigns • For pedagogical materials to promote girls' empowerment • For advocacy with countries and major donors

Emergencies and post-crisis education interventions

34. The third priority theme builds on the track record of UNICEF for emergency response in education, as well as its work on education in post-crisis countries. These are challenging circumstances in which the rights of children are most at risk. In this area, UNICEF has proved its competence, and donors and other partners expect leadership from the organization. The focus is on restoring education (and protection) services by setting up safe learning spaces as part of the humanitarian response to emergencies. This ensures that children affected by an emergency have their right to schooling restored in the shortest possible time and in the safest possible environment. It also provides a platform for later action to help countries get children back to school and rebuild education systems for a timely transition from post-crisis to development.

Table 3: Examples of support in emergencies and post-crisis interventions

Type of support measure	Application of support measure
Create safe learning spaces for children and provide basic facilities and supplies for quality learning and other basic needs	• For emergency countries (conflict/natural disaster) • Provides care and support for children, time and space for families • School-in-a-box, information technology, supply packages and services
Improve prediction and prevention, and intensify preparedness for emergencies in countries that are prone to natural disasters or conflicts Build capacity by providing education and training to help with prediction, prevention and preparedness for emergencies (within countries and agencies that work on education in emergencies)	• For countries prone to conflict or natural disaster • Increases chances for quickly restoring normalcy • Helps prevent/minimize reversal of development gains • Strengthen national capacity to respond to emergencies
Mount back-to-school campaigns as part of the peace dividend in post-conflict states and as the first stage of helping countries to 'build back better' education systems	• For post-crisis countries at end of conflict or disaster • Helps focus on the future (children); away from the past • Provides rallying point for new beginnings in countries • Provides opportunity for countries to 'build back better'
Strengthen cluster approach for education in emergencies and develop surge capacity for partners to respond to emergencies rapidly, effectively and efficiently	• For partner agencies working in emergencies promotes efficient use of human and other resources • Links education with other sectors through IASC cluster • Links emergency response to reconstruction phase

35. Two cross-cutting areas will be used to support these three priority themes.

Early child development and school readiness

36. Progress in getting children to enter and complete primary education, and in establishing the quality of that education, will continue to suffer setbacks as long as too many children start school later than the prescribed age and are poorly prepared

for learning. Early child development and school readiness is an important support area that cuts across the three priority themes in education programming. This focus on early development and school readiness helps assure that programming in education can be more readily linked to support for child survival programmes.

Table 4: Examples of support for early child development and school readiness

Type of support measure	Application of support measure
'Parenting Education' for adolescents in and out of school and for adults in literacy and development programmes	• For countries with low pre-school enrolment/provision • Must integrate parenting skills into other programmes • Use mass media extensively as a key support tool
'Community-based' early childhood care and development programmes that are preferably linked to other development programmes for women and children	• For countries with a tradition of community childcare • Best integrated into women's development programmes • Can also be linked to play centres close to schools • Training traditional caregivers in modern methods
Formal pre-school programmes that are preferably linked with primary schools and use national standards for school readiness	• For countries with high pre-school enrolment/provision • Best linked to existing primary school • Most appropriate for applying 'readiness' standards
Child-to-Child school-readiness initiative in which children already in school receive lessons and resources so they can take home good practices to get younger siblings ready for school by the right age	• Alternative for countries that cannot afford pre-schools • Benefits pre-school children and children in school too • Offers improvements in primary school pedagogy

Enhancing quality in primary and secondary education

37. Quality of education is a major challenge for many countries, even those that are close to achieving universal primary completion. It is a cross-cutting area for the three priority themes in programming for education. To date, there has been a rather fragmented approach to quality education, with investments directed to teacher training or material supplies or curriculum revision. There has been a progressive shift from these single- factor interventions to a more packaged approach that uses child-friendly school (CFS) models to help countries establish national standards for quality education systems. CFS models help countries to deal systematically with an ever-increasing array of quality issues in education and help set standards for quality improvement nationally in the following areas.

Table 5: Examples of quality issues addressed by child-friendly schools

- Safe school buildings (location, design, construction and maintenance)
- Infrastructure and main facilities (water, sanitation, energy, play grounds)
- Links between schools and their communities (school boards, parent-teacher associations, etc.)
- Training of teachers (child-centred pedagogy, reflective practitioner)
- Caring for children's basic needs (school meals, health checks, deworming)
- Emphasis on learning through play for younger children (joyful learning)
- Focus on self-identity, negotiating skills and coping behaviours (life skills)
- Availability of learning resources and teaching aids (stimulating classrooms)
- Care and protection of learners (the school as a protective environment)
- Support for child participation (the school as a democratic institution)
- Appropriate knowledge, skills, attitude and behaviours (curriculum relevance)
- Achievement of prescribed learning outcomes (school effectiveness).

38. On the basis of lessons learned from applying CFS models in a wide range of countries, UNICEF supports the national efforts and the coordinated support of external partners outlined below.

Table 6: Support for quality through child-friendly schools

Type of support measure	Application of support measure
Introducing the CFS model to planners and practitioners in countries and to key staff at UNICEF/other agencies	• Publish and distribute the CFS manual (being finalized) • Make e-learning CFS package available (being finalized) • Produce and distribute handbook of CFS case studies
Training and capacity-building for using CFS models/standards to enhance quality of education nationally	• Support design of CFS training courses in local institutions • Provide CFS materials to local institutions • Support CFS Training of Trainers Workshops in countries
Providing support for implementation of CFS models	• Develop demonstration CFS schools as practical examples • Guide, support and help build capacity for CFS work

Table 7: Programme objectives and indicators

Key objectives and indicators for priority themes		
The '3Es' Priority Themes ***Key objectives and indicators for priority themes***	**Cross-cutting focus areas to support priority themes**	
	Early Development and School Readiness	**Enhancing** Quality in Primary and Secondary Education
Equal Access and universal primary completion — Millennium Development Goal 2 • Help countries to reduce number of primary-school- aged children out of school by at least 15 per cent annually up to 2015 • Help countries to reduce primary repetition rates and dropout rates in order to improve Grade Appropriate Net Enrolment Ratio (GANER) by at least 5 per cent annually up to 2015	• Parenting education programmes • Community-based childcare • Pre-school/nursery programmes • Child-to-child programme for school readiness	• Child-to-child programmes for school readiness • CFS standards to reduce repetition/dropout rates
Empowerment through **Girls' Education** and Gender Mainstreaming — Millennium Development Goal 3 • Help reduce the gender gap in transition rates from primary to secondary education by at least 15 per cent annually up to 2015 • Support inclusion of gender in budgeting/resource allocation criteria for the education sector (Gender Budget Reviews) • Help improve learning achievement for girls in key subject areas, including life skills (exam scores/achievement scores)	• Early gender socialization as part of early childhood development (ECD) programmes • Mothers' literacy as component of ECD programmes • Child-to-child programme for gender sensitization of children already in school	• CFS standards to improve retention rates and transition to secondary education for girls • Gender budgeting as part of the CFS standards • CFS standards for improved learning outcomes
Emergencies and post-crisis education interventions *(IASC cluster approach)* • Help restore normalcy for all affected children and adolescents through safe, secure and supportive learning environments • Help reintegrate children affected by conflict (child soldiers), through specially designed programmes for healing and learning • Help post-crisis countries build back better education institutions and education systems	• ECD play kits for pre-school children in emergencies • Registration, care and creche support for preschool children • Child-to-child programme for community-based care/support to affected preschool children	• Child-friendly schools/learning spaces for quality in emergencies • Youth participation and design of quality learning for reintegration • Bold initiatives and innovative models to build back better for education institutions and systems

B. Programming scope

39. The scope of UNICEF work in education is determined by the agency's mandate and orientation as a children's agency. Input from developing countries, donors and other key partners helps shape how UNICEF works in different contexts, who are the main beneficiaries, and what are the limits to its work in education.

Mandate for children (from birth to 18 years old)

40. These issues are best addressed through a life cycle approach to reflect the changing needs of children within different age groups. In the very early years (0 to 3 years) the focus is on child survival, which is mainly about health, nutrition and protection. The education contribution to this age group includes general education of adolescents (especially girls) as future parents; quality basic education that enables children to take home good health and nutrition practices to their families; support for adult literacy programmes led by UNESCO (especially female adult literacy); and parenting programmes that are part of the ECD interventions.

41. Beyond the age group of 0 to 3 years, the focus shifts from surviving to thriving and developing, which have more to do with socialization, intellectual growth and skills development. Between ages 3 and 6 or 7 (the age at which children start primary school) what education can contribute is centred on school readiness programmes. These take several forms, including community-based early childhood care, nurseries and pre-school programmes, as well as the innovative child-to-child approach that is part of ECD programmes.

42. The next age group in the life cycle approach covers the primary school years, which can vary between ages 6 to 12 or ages 7 to 13 in most countries. The contribution that education can make to this age group is best provided within formal primary schools, but the reality in many countries is that a significant proportion of children in this age group are not attending school. UNICEF is concerned about children in school and out of school. Some out-of-school children may be in alternative learning situations (non-formal education), in temporary learning settings in refugee camps or emergency settlements, or engaged in some form of livelihood in their communities and receiving no education.

43. Finally there are the post-primary years that in many countries cover ages 12 or 13 to age 18. Children and adolescents in this age group may be in secondary school or some other form of post-primary education, including technical/vocational education (TVET) and training. In many countries, a significant percentage of these children and adolescents are still in primary school because they started school late or repeated the same level. An even higher percentage of this age group is simply out of school because of limited provision of post-primary schooling opportunities for those who have completed primary school. This latter category of out-of-school children and adolescents would typically be engaged in some form of employment or income-generation.

Table 8: Basic education in the UNICEF education support strategy

0 – 3 years	3 years – grade 1	Official primary school age group	Post-primary
Intersectoral Health Interventions	ECD programmes	Children in formal primary school	Secondary school
Parenting Education	Child-to-child for school readiness	Children in alternative learning centers (non-formal education)	Non-formal education/TVET
Girls' Education	Community ECD	Children in Temporary Schools (Emergency learning centers set up in refugee camps or shelters)	Use of popular media (so-called third way)
Female Adult Literacy	Pre-school Education	Out-of-school children (Use of the popular media — "third way")	Youth in camps

Orientation — the child's right to an education

44. The scope of education programming is also determined by the orientation of UNICEF as a children's agency whose mandate is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant human rights treaties. Programming is focused on supporting and advocating for the right of all children to an education. The scope will be influenced particularly by those situations in which the right to an education is most at risk. UNICEF contribution to education therefore involves supporting and strengthening the capacity of various stakeholders responsible for facilitating the right of children to education. These include parents, communities, teachers, heads of schools, education administrators and planners, as well as policy makers and investors. In facilitating the right of children to an education, the purpose is not simply to get them into school. It is also to support quality in terms of providing a safe and protective environment in which children can achieve the prescribed learning that equips them for life in their own communities as well as for participating and competing in life beyond their immediate communities. Programming therefore includes dealing specifically with the elements that result in a safe and protective learning environment, and more generally with what is in the best interests of the child. Hence UNICEF supports numeracy, literacy and other tools for learning, together with key elements of an effective life skills programme on social roles and responsibilities and the development of self-confidence, as well as major issues of current interest such as substance abuse, environment and climate change, conflict prevention, peace education and HIV/AIDS prevention, which are all incorporated into the CFS schools initiative.

Expectations — voice for children; disparities and emergencies

45. The good track record of UNICEF means that donors and partners have certain expectations of what UNICEF can contribute to education and development. They expect UNICEF to be the voice for children, seeking their best interests, in advocacy concerning all matters relating to education, whether in the area of budget allocation or design/equipping of school buildings, teacher training, or planning of curriculum content. Similarly, there is an expectation that with its focus on rights,

UNICEF will be a champion for addressing disparities in education, particularly in the area of gender, where UNICEF has taken on special responsibilities through its leadership of UNGEI. Most of all and reflecting its founding mandate, UNICEF is expected to champion the protection of children in emergency conditions. This is not only about protecting children's lives but also about safeguarding their rights, including the right to an education. In view of all these expectations, what UNICEF can and should contribute to education also includes advocacy, leveraging of resources for children, support for equitable access and completion of basic education, as well as interventions to restore education for children and youth affected by emergencies.

IV. Priority countries and target populations

46. UNICEF tailors its work to the situation of countries in several categories and to different population groups. Countries can be categorized according to similarities in their education development and their rate of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Because national averages can mask major disparities affecting some population groups, there is a risk posed by programming that supports countries solely on the basis of aggregate statistical data. UNICEF therefore emphasizes the need to disaggregate national data in order to better identify population groups that are adversely affected by disparities, even in countries with good progress on quality education for all.

47. Working closely with key partner agencies and within the four main partnership networks, UNICEF will continue to support education in most developing countries, putting special emphasis on their most disadvantaged population groups. To optimize its contribution to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, UNICEF will give highest priority to some 50 countries. Based on experience, there is an increased level of effort by UNICEF in these countries in terms of advocacy; deployment of top quality staff and consultants to work on issues affecting these countries; leveraging of financial resources (e.g., through the Fast Track Initiative); and more intensive work on developing innovative strategies to address problems faced by these countries.

48. This involves greater focus on advocacy, more intensive efforts to find creative and innovative solutions (bold initiatives) and stronger willingness to help leverage additional resources for education in these countries. The selection process involved an obvious interest in those countries that are furthest away from achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in terms of, for example, either the country's rate of progress or the sheer number of school-aged children out of school. However the process of supporting countries to achieve success that is robust and sustainable is complex, and the challenges are complicated.

49. **Selection of priority countries.** The process involved several criteria:

(a) Countries with high child mortality rates, low school enrolment levels and weak gender parity, where education interventions (girls' education in particular) can improve these indicators and help break the vicious cycle through which mothers' illiteracy fuels poor childcare, leading to undernutrition and high rates of child mortality;

(b) Emergency and post-crisis countries where education needs to be part of the humanitarian response to restore basic social services, as well as the reconstruction process to rebuild shattered lives (especially those of adolescents and youth associated with armed groups) and to rebuild national systems for delivering and managing social services;[2]

(c) Countries that are 'stagnating' (i.e., have low enrolment and poor quality) or are otherwise at risk due to factors such as high HIV/AIDS prevalence, economic decline, poor water and sanitation conditions, and environmental degradation; where the key indicators that have shown little improvement in a decade or more can be changed through major advocacy campaigns and innovative measures or bold initiatives that help to promote enrolment growth and quality improvement, measures that can turn around such countries;

(d) Selected 'upstream' countries that are progressing well with access, completion and gender parity, but are having other major problems, for example, with including ethnic minorities, building strong citizenship, stemming the tide of extremism, doing more to empower women in society and promoting more democratic norms.

V. Resources and management

50. Studies on education financing indicate that there are three critical areas in which support is needed most. First is the need for a sharp rise in both national budget allocations and official development assistance (ODA) support for basic education. Second, additional resources are required more for recurrent costs (average 55 per cent) than for capital investments (average 46 per cent). Third, teachers' salaries are a major proportion of costs, averaging 40 per cent of total. This analysis has implications for how UNICEF allocates its own resources in support of countries as well as for what it advocates for when it seeks to leverage external resources for countries. If a strategic approach is not taken to this issue of education financing then much effort and resources could be used inefficiently.

51. On allocation of national resources to basic education, the trend in developing countries is encouraging, with an average of 15.5 per cent of government spending (4.5 per cent of gross national product) devoted to education. However teachers' salaries have skewed allocations towards an average of 90 per cent for recurrent costs, compared with the estimated proportion of 55 per cent required in education financing. This indicates that measures must be taken to reduce the proportion of the budget going to teachers' salaries as the total level of funding increases for education. Without this increased budget, allocation will not produce the expected gains in access, quality and retention rates which depend on many other factors besides teachers' salaries.

52. The UNICEF focus on CFS provides a new opportunity to help countries to deal with key aspects of the teaching profession that can result in a more rational

[2] Preparedness for and performance in emergencies are shaped by the extensive country presence, by pre-positioning supplies, by availability of pre-packaged kits, and by having a surge capacity that can rapidly increase staff levels when required. They are also guided by adherence to the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies' Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies.

distribution of education finance across different elements. CFS models support high quality in-service training, which means that teachers can be productive while improving their competencies. Such training gives greater value for money than the currently predominant pre-service training. These models also emphasize the central role of teachers as facilitators of learning, managers of classroom processes and brokers of school-community links. Emphasizing these roles helps to address concerns with teachers' professional recognition, respect from the community and job satisfaction, which surveys indicate can be just as important to teachers as salary issues. It may be that through CFS models countries can achieve an optimal balance between numbers of teachers, commitment and professionalism of the teaching force and the levels of total teacher salary budget.

53. On ODA the trend is also encouraging. Commitments made by the G-8 and other major donors promise increased ODA of $50 billion per year over current levels by 2010, ($130 billion compared to $80 billion in 2004). Education is expected to continue to benefit from this increased ODA, but the challenge will be to make the most strategic use of ODA so that countries will be enabled to make rapid and sustainable progress.

54. In terms of its own expenditure pattern, the trends for UNICEF show that during the last medium-term strategic plan (2002-2005), expenditures on girls' education rose from $201 million in 2003 to $432.5 million in 2005 and totalled over $1.1 billion during 2002–2005. This is 21 per cent of total expenditure, exceeding the 18 per-cent-share projected for the period. In addition, expenditures on school-based water sanitation and hygiene, helminth control, HIV/AIDS prevention and school meals (nutrition) were linked to girls' education. The trends also show that expenditure on quality was higher than for access or learning achievement, rising from $144 million in 2002 to $314 million in 2005. This is encouraging, since work on quality is pivotal for boosting access and retention as well as for improving learning achievement. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, with the highest number of children out of school and the worst gender disparities, had the highest expenditures at $409 million and $393 million, respectively. In the 25 acceleration countries, expenditure rose from $100 million in 2002 to $162 million in 2005, reflecting a modest annual growth in line with their priority status during this period.

Table 9: Projected expenditure levels for education, 2006 to 2015 (in $ millions)

Level	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Low	413	424	435	447	459	471	484	471	459	447
Medium	450	462	474	487	500	513	527	513	500	487
High	468	480	493	506	519	533	547	533	519	506

55. This projection does not capture the "opportunistic" funding that may be required for several areas: innovative reforms, facilitating civil society contributions, or intensified support as countries gain momentum. This includes, for example, opportunistic funds for transition countries, forgotten emergencies, regional 'learning exchanges', local gender education movements, and the like. The combination of regular resources with thematic funding and versions of other resources will ensure that UNICEF and its funding partners will have the flexibility

to address changes in the trends which form the basis of these expenditure projections.

56. In terms of human resources, UNICEF education staff number 364 across 155 countries, seven regional offices and headquarters. The highest numbers are in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where the needs are greatest. Potential for self-reliance in countries is indicated by an increase in National staff from 56 per cent in 2000 to 68 per cent in 2005. In the same way UNICEF shows progress in practising what it advocates for in terms of gender parity and equality. Women now make up 56 per cent of education staff and are more fairly represented across post levels. In general also, staffing profiles have improved by levels of qualification, diversity of fields and years of experience. To reinforce these positive trends, UNICEF is emphasizing staff development, with internally developed e-learning and customized courses,[3] as well as established courses offered by partner agencies such as the World Bank. There is also increased effort to strengthen national capacity through support for tailor-made courses at local universities and institutions for CFS models, emergency preparedness and education reform in post-crisis countries.

VI. Monitoring and evaluation

57. In education there is a commitment by major partners to support the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* published by UNESCO as the main source of authoritative analysis on progress with the EFA goals and the education and gender aspects of the Millennium Development Goals. There is also a consensus around using the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) as the main source of education data for all countries. UNICEF is fully committed to this position, but has been working with UIS to address discrepancies in education data. One of the main issues to be resolved is the discrepancy between official school records used by UNESCO and household survey data from the multiple indicator cluster survey used by UNICEF. These discrepancies have shown that enrolment data from official records do not match attendance data from household surveys. Both agencies have already started collaborating to reconcile the data. It is clear, however, that part of the difficulty is due to the fact that some children recorded as enrolled in school may have dropped out prematurely without this being reflected in school records. As school participation improves, the gap between enrolment and attendance data should narrow. While using UIS data, UNICEF will also make use of its own household survey data, as these allow for analysis of education indicators according to other key variables such as wealth/poverty, rural location, mother's education and others.

58. Regarding broad indicators to measure progress in the three priority themes and two supporting areas in this strategy, the outputs and outcomes in the following table will be important for assessing countries' progress and the overall contribution of partners.

[3] Examples include e-learning for sector-wide approaches and CFS, and courses for Women in Leadership and the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance learning programme on public policy, advocacy and partnerships for children's rights.

Table 10: Output and outcome indicators

Output indicators	Outcome indicators
Equal Access and Universal Primary Completion *Target: To help countries achieve universal primary education by 2015*	
• Percentage of primary-school-aged children not enrolled in or not attending school (disaggregated by gender, rural/urban and poverty quintile) • Percentage of primary-school-aged children in some/all categories below (as appropriate) who are not enrolled or not attending school: o Children with disabilities o Children from ethnic minorities o Children from indigenous populations o Children affected by AIDS o Orphans and other vulnerable children o Internally displaced/refugee children • Percentage of grade 1 cohort completing primary cycle (primary completion rate) by gender, rural/urban and poverty quintile	• Inclusiveness of primary schools and education systems (open access, low repetition, and high completion rates) *index to be determined* • Transition rates from primary to secondary and other post-primary destinations (percentage of children continuing education after primary; by destination, and also disaggregated by gender, rural/urban and poverty quintile) • Improvements in test scores or exam results at end of the primary school cycle (disaggregated by gender, as well as by province/district)
Empowerment through Girls' Education and Gender Mainstreaming *Target: To help countries eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015*	
• Gender Parity Index (GPI) for grade 1 cohorts' survival rate to grade 5 • GPI for transition rates from primary to secondary school • Percentage of schools offering life skills or similar empowering courses in the curriculum	• Percentage of females in a basket of key professions (teaching, medicine, engineering, politics, business). *Index to be determined* • Percentage of females in leadership positions in politics, industry, business and government • Status of women in society, based on a basket of indicators. *Index to be determined*
Emergencies and Post-Crisis Education Interventions *Target: To help countries restore learning opportunities for children affected by emergencies within the school year; and to help countries to build back education systems better after emergencies*	
• Percentage of children back in school or at a learning facility within six weeks after being affected by an emergency (restoring right to learning). • Percentage of schools restored to functioning status within 12 months of being destroyed, damaged or made non-functional by an emergency	• Degree to which education system restored to fully functional for all parts of an emergency or post-crisis country. *Index to be determined* • Improvements (effectiveness, efficiency) in the education system in an emergency or post-crisis country, after restoration process. *Index to be determined.*
Early Development and School Readiness	
• Percentage of children starting primary school at prescribed age (grade 1: Grade Appropriate Net Enrolment Ratio (GANER)/Grade Appropriate Net	• Percentage grade 1 cohort continuing to grade 5 (grade 5: GANER/GANAR) — Disaggregated • Percentage of repetition in primary-school cycle • Percentage of dropouts in primary-school cycle

Attendance Rate (GANAR) (Disaggregated by gender; rural/urban; poverty) • Number of countries with national standards for school readiness • Percentage of grade 1 entrants meeting the national standards for school readiness	• Percentage rise in key test scores at grade 5
Enhancing Quality in Primary and Secondary Education	
• Number of countries with national standards for child-friendly schools (or similar models) • Percentage of schools in a country meeting the national standards for CFS • Percentage of schools embarking on a path to quality through CFS models, in countries without CFS national standards	• Improvements in final primary exam results or test scores (national, provincial, district levels) • Improvements in final secondary exam results or test scores (national, provincial, district levels) • Improvements in work force quality indicated by changes in the pool of educated and trained human resource available in country

59. In addition, UNICEF will continue to work with UNESCO and the World Bank to help countries to develop suitable and affordable programmes for measuring learning achievement in schools, and at the national level. These can later be extended to include one or more of the international learning achievement measuring schemes that most countries cannot afford at this moment. There will also be a strong emphasis on research and evaluation studies for knowledge-building and learning from doing. UNICEF will harness the insight and knowledge accumulated from its field interventions and, in order to build knowledge, combines them with the wealth of emerging theoretical knowledge on areas of interest by partner agencies and academic institutions.

VII. Draft decision

60. It is recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

Endorses the "UNICEF Education Strategy" (E/ICEF/2007/10) as the UNICEF strategy document for its programmes in support of education.